

ITEM: 9

SUBJECT: COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICTS OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY, WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS FOR OPERATION AND CONSTRUCTION, WESTLAKE FARMS COMPOSTING FACILITY, Kings County

BOARD ACTION: *Consideration of Waste Discharge Requirements*

BACKGROUND: The County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (Discharger) plans to construct and operate a composting facility (facility) that will use, as a feedstock, treated municipal sewage sludge (biosolids). The facility will be in southern Kings County approximately 2.5 miles east of Interstate Highway 5 and five miles southeast of Kettleman City. The composted biosolids will be used as a soil amendment on farmland the Discharger owns in Kings County, or sold to others.

The feedstock will meet or exceed federal requirements for Class B biosolids. The finished product will meet the definition of “exceptional quality” biosolids.

ISSUES: Protection of groundwater beneath the Composting Facility. The facility will be constructed to all the prescriptive standards of Title 27, California Code of Regulations, §20005, et seq. (Title 27) except for the requirement to maintain five feet of separation between the facility’s storm water retention pond and the highest anticipated groundwater elevation. Is that enough to protect groundwater quality? There would only be a three and one-half foot separation between the bottom of the retention pond and highest groundwater. However, shallow groundwater is poor quality, the soils underlying the facility are very low permeability, the facility is in an area of low precipitation, and the proposed WDRs require full containment of waste and prohibit degradation.

Importation of salts into the Basin. The discharger will be annually importing up to 900,000 tons of material, containing up to 2,500 tons of salt, into the San Joaquin Valley for use on 14,562 acres of farmland. The proposed WDRs require a Salinity Evaluation and Minimization Plan to identify sources of salinity in the discharge, and measures available to minimize the concentration and mass loading of salinity. The WDRs may be reopened in the future to incorporate applicable recommendations from the Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability (CV-SALTS) management program.

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the Waste Discharge Requirements.

Mgmt. Review_____

Legal Review_____

September 23, 2010

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